NUMB. CL.

The GUARDIAN.

——————Neſcio quâ dulcedine læti,
Progeniem nidoſque fovent.—— Virg.

Wedneſday, September 2. 1713.

I Went the other Day to viſit *Eliza*, who, in the perfect Bloom of Beauty, is the Mother of ſeveral Children. She had a little prating Girl upon her Lap, who was begging to be very fine, that ſhe might go Abroad; and the indulgent Mother, at her little Daughter's Requeſt, had juſt taken the Knots off her own Head, to adorn the Hair of the pre[illegible] Trifler. A ſmiling Boy was at the ſame time careſſing a Lap-Dog, which is their Mother's Favourite, becauſe it pleaſes the Children; and ſhe, with a Delight in her Looks which heightened her Beauty, ſo divided her Converſation with the two pretty Prattlers, as to make them both equally chearful.

As I came in, ſhe ſaid, with a Bluſh, Mr. IRONSIDE, *though you are an Old Batchelor, you muſt not laugh at my Tenderneſs to my Children.* I need not tell my Reader, what Civil things I ſaid in Anſwer to the Lady, whoſe Matron-like Behaviour gave me infinite Satisfaction: Since I my ſelf take great Pleaſure in playing with Children, and am ſeldom unprovided of Plumms or Marbles, to make my Court to ſuch entertaining Companions.

Whence is it, ſaid I to my ſelf when I was alone, that the Affection of Parents is ſo intenſe to their Off-ſpring? Is it becauſe they generally find ſuch Reſemblances in what they have produced, as that thereby they think themſelves renewed in their Children, and are willing to tranſmit themſelves to future Times? Or is it, becauſe they think themſelves obliged, by the Dictates of Humanity, to nouriſh and rear what is placed ſo immediately under their Protection; and what, by their means, is brought into this World, the Scene of Miſery, of Neceſſity? Theſe will not come up to it. Is it not rather the good Providence of that Being, who in a ſupereminent Degree protects and cheriſhes the whole Race of Mankind, his Sons and Creatures? How ſhall we, any other way, account for this natural Affection, ſo ſignally diſplayed throughout every Species of the Animal Creation, without which the Courſe of Nature would quickly fail, and every various Kind be extinct? Inſtances of Tenderneſs in the moſt Savage Brutes are ſo frequent, that Quotations of that Kind are altogether unneceſſary.

If we, who [illegible] no particular Concern in them, take a ſecret Delight in obſerving the gentle Dawn of Reaſon in Babes; if our [illegible] are ſoothed with their half forming and [illegible] Sounds; if we are charmed with [illegible] Mimickry, and ſurprized at the unexp[illegible] Wit and Cunning in theſe Miniatures of [illegible]: What Tranſport may we imagine in the Breaſts of thoſe, into whom Natural Inſtinct hath poured Tenderneſs and Fondneſs for them! How amiable [illegible] ſuch a Weakneſs in Humane Nature! or rather, how great a Weakneſs is it, to give Humanity ſo reproachful a Name! The bare Conſideration of Paternal Affection ſhould methinks create a more grateful Tenderneſs in Children towards their Parents, than we generally ſee; and the ſilent Whiſpers of Nature be attended to, though the Laws of God and Man did not call aloud.

Theſe ſilent Whiſpers of Nature [illegible] a marvellous Power, even when [illegible] been unknown. There are ſeveral [illegible]tory of tender Friendſhips formed betwixt [illegible] knew not of their near Relation. Such [illegible] confirm me in an Opinion I have long entertained, that there is a Sympathy betwixt Souls, which cannot be explained by the Prejudice of Education, the Senſe of Duty, or any other Human Motive.

The

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